United Nations E/ICEF/1999/P/L.28

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
9 July 1999

Original: English

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Second regular session 1999
7–10 September 1999
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

For action

Recommendation for funding for a short-duration country programme**

Afghanistan

Summary

The present document contains a recommendation for funding from general resources and supplementary funds for the country programme of Afghanistan with a duration of three years to support activities that will lead to the preparation of a full-length country programme. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of $26,461,000 from general resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $18,000,000 in supplementary funds, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2000 to 2002.

* E/ICEF/1999/15

** The figures provided in the present document are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1998. They will be contained in the "Summary of 1999 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.16).

99-20465 (E) 280799

Basic data

(1997 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	10
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	257
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	165
Underweight (% moderate and severe)	48
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	..
Literacy (% male/female)	27/6
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1993)	42/15
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1989)	43
Access to safe water (%) (1994)	12
Routine EPI vaccines financed by Government (%) (1996)	0
GNP per capita (US$)	..[a]
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
tuberculosis	56 per cent
diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	37 per cent
measles	47 per cent
poliomyelitis	37 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus	3 per cent

[a] Estimated to be low income $785 or less

The situation of children and women

1. The complexity of the Afghanistan situation escapes easy assessment and analysis. For the last two decades, the children and women of Afghanistan have been subject to a volatile, violent political crisis, as well as a human rights and humanitarian emergency. As of May 1999, the Taliban control about 80 per cent of the geographical area of the country.

2. Underlying problems include a shattered economy, the destruction of social infrastructure and severe inadequacy of basic social services. Four outstanding problems affect children and women: (a) the least developed country status of Afghanistan; (b) the long-term trend of high levels of mortality for both young children and women; (c) the profound damage to the traditional coping mechanisms of families and communities; and (d) severe, institutionalized gender discrimination.

3. Infant mortality is estimated at about 165 per 1,000 live births; maternal mortality is estimated at about 1,700 per 100,000 live births, the second highest rate in the world; and under-five mortality is about 257 per 1,000 live births. Vaccine-preventable diseases account for about 21 per cent of child deaths, with diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections accounting for another 42 per cent. Since around 1980, about 20 per cent of all newborns were under weight. Chronic malnutrition affects almost 50 per cent of children. Fifteen per cent of children suffer from acute malnutrition, while poliomyelitis and cerebral palsy are major causes of disability.

4. An estimated 32 per cent of boys and 8 per cent of girls participate in primary education. Poor attendance and high drop-out and low completion rates are accompanied by Taliban restrictions on education for girls. Others at risk include street children, orphaned children, children living in institutions and children traumatized by war. A 1997 UNICEF study in Kabul found that 97 per cent of the children surveyed had witnessed some form of violence.

5. Overcoming deprivation among Afghanistan's children and women calls for a strategy that is based on human rights principles and engages communities in national recovery.

Programme cooperation, 1996–1999

6. The country programme has experienced mixed results in pursuit of its objectives due largely to the ongoing war. Cross-cutting communication activities to promote the rights of children and women included the translation, printing and distribution of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and *Child Care In Islam*, as well as support to the British Broadcasting Corporation/ Afghan Educational Drama series.

7. Despite severe constraints, there have been significant achievements in health and nutrition. There was a prominent gain for child survival through improved primary health care (PHC), health management structures, and national immunization and acceleration campaigns. The principal achievement was an increase in measles coverage from 14 per cent in 1994 to 47 per cent in 1997.

8. Another set of achievements included the rehabilitation of piped water systems, the installation of community hand-pump wells, the promotion of household sanitary latrines, the establishment of sanitation and hygiene centres, and the chlorination of dug wells. Two rounds of an oral rehydration therapy, sanitation and hygiene campaign have taken place since 1997. Taliban restrictions on women affect what has otherwise been encouraging capacity-building and community participation activities.

9. UNICEF suspended assistance to formal education in 1996 because of the Taliban's gender discrimination policy. Where discrimination is not applied, UNICEF supports primary education in Afghanistan, including non-formal education in Taliban areas and formal education in non-Taliban areas.

10. Selective assistance for children and women at high risk has generally proven effective, for example, for services for disabled children and women in the Eastern Region. The psychosocial trauma programme in Kabul has the potential for further development. However, the Taliban's ban on female employment limits its effectiveness.

11. Research, monitoring and evaluation activities have been valuable. They have included: a multiple indicator cluster survey (MICs); evaluations and reviews of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI), the cold chain, water and environmental sanitation (WES), and education; and studies on children in conflict and working children.

Lessons learned

12. In general, the strategies for each programme intervention were appropriate, although they were hampered by the conflict situation. Areas in need of strengthening include increasing female staff to reach more women and expanding partnerships using complementary strengths to overcome obstacles.

13. The delivery of basic social services in a changing environment has a better chance of success when the main strategy is accompanied by complementary approaches. Alternative strategies are required to respond to restrictions in the formal service delivery system, as is the case in education.

14. The role that UNICEF plays in Afghanistan is greater than the country programme of cooperation itself. UNICEF needs to continue to play a key role in promoting children's rights and gender issues in the Strategic Framework process as well as in the country programme. The structure and strategy of the current programme do not afford sufficient attention to the promotion of children's and women's rights. The dimension of rights promotion in the new programme will help to make the country programme strategy more effective overall.

Recommended programme cooperation, 2000–2002

Estimated annual expenditure

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*Total*
General resources				
Survival	4 355	4 238	4 167	12 760
Development	1 251	1 385	1 387	4 023
Protection and promotion	985	1 093	1 062	3 140
Cross-sectoral costs	2 054	2 180	2 304	6 538
Subtotal	**8 645**	**8 896**	**8 920**	**26 461**
Supplementary funding				
Survival	5 100	4 880	4 880	14 860
Development	800	1 020	1 020	2 840
Protection and promotion	100	100	100	300
Subtotal	**6 000**	**6 000**	**6 000**	**18 000**
Total	**14 645**	**14 896**	**14 920**	**44 461**

Programme preparation process

15. The preparation of the Afghanistan country programme has been guided by the principles of the United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan. Assistance is provided as part of an overall effort to achieve peace. Assistance will be provided when it can be reasonably determined that no direct political or military advantage will accrue to the warring parties in Afghanistan. The new country programme has also been developed based on the country context, taking into account the priorities of the global medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 (E/ICEF/1998/13 and Corr.1), and on experiences and lessons learned from the current country programme. The long-term goal of UNICEF cooperation in Afghanistan is to ensure the fulfilment of children's and women's rights through the strategies outlined below. During the country programme preparation process, UNICEF has undertaken significant consultation with other United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Programme objectives and strategies

16. The present country programme recommendation proposes a three-year programme, one year less in duration than the current country programme cycle. The continuing situation of armed conflict, the Taliban edicts restricting the right of girls to education and restrictions on the rights of women, and the paucity of national economic and social development planning and investment in basic social services led to the decision to recommend a short-duration programme.

17. Three interwoven programme objectives for UNICEF cooperation provide an appropriate, in-depth focus, and will serve as directional beacons in a country situation of uncertainty and turbulence. The first objective is to persuade national and local authorities to honour the provisions of the two Conventions related to children and women; the second is to apply improved policies to increase access to basic social services so as to generate measurable results during the three-year period; and the third is to apply in all UNICEF-assisted activities effective practices for the empowerment of families and communities to help them recover key traditional coping mechanisms and learn new,

appropriate means to ensure child survival, protection and development.

18. There is a flexible mix and balance of strategies, a virtual prerequisite in the current volatile country situation. A premium will be placed on programming initiative, creativity and flexibility, coupled with good judgements regarding programming opportunities and constraints. A combination of strategies will be employed as relevant, including: (a) convergence and geographical focus; (b) various forms and patterns of community participation and partnerships involving NGOs, government organizations, donors and others; (c) experimentation with new ways to bring gender equality into programme activities; and (d) an appropriate and measured mix of responses, as needed, to catastrophes and natural disasters.

19. There will be three programme clusters instead of the current five: (a) survival; (b) development; and (c) protection and promotion. A cross-sectoral programme will support the three clusters. While the areas of intervention remain oriented to meeting the needs of the children and women of Afghanistan, the titles and objectives of the programmes better reflect an intersectoral, more holistic focus on children's and women's rights. Research, monitoring and evaluation are built into each programme and made coherent through an integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP).

20. General resources comprise 60 per cent of the total planned financing and cover all proposed areas of activity. Supplementary funding will enable the expansion of geographic and population coverage; more in-depth development of programme services; and strengthened advocacy, research, evaluation and monitoring.

Survival

21. This programme, which is allocated the major share of programme funds, will reach at least 30 per cent of the families living in 10 of Afghanistan's 30 provinces with the knowledge and skills needed to help ensure that the survival rights of children are fulfilled. It will also increase access to basic health and nutrition, as well as water and sanitation services, to at least 50 per cent of the target population, up from the current level of 35 per cent. In addition, it will intensify policy dialogue with national authorities and international partners on a cohesive national PHC policy, as well as on nutrition and water and sanitation. Technical strategies include: (a) partnerships with the Ministry of Public Health, the World Health Organization and NGOs to ensure that UNICEF cooperation is provided in a complementary and coherent manner with partners; and (b) projects on maternal and child health and the prevention of WES-related diseases. Operational strategies will include the use of a PHC approach currently being developed in Laghman Province; nutritional promotion as an integral part of community-based interventions; expanding EPI coverage to 330 districts nationwide from its current base in 280 districts; collaboration with regional management teams; and support to provincial management teams comprised of the Ministry of Public Health and Rural Reconstruction Development. An innovative feature in monitoring and evaluation will be the use of MICS and community surveillance to assess progress towards increasing community support for health services.

Development

22. In this programme, the scope for effective implementation will be related to the progress achieved in consultations with the Taliban regarding the right to primary education, especially the education of girls. The programme will support efforts to convince national authorities to honour the right of all children to basic education and undertake more effective advocacy with international partners so that the goals of Education for All begin to be reflected in national policy and service standards. The main feature of the strategy is to focus on reaching large numbers of children through formal primary education if the authorities undertake to provide equal access to education for girls. A complementary strategy, as in the present country programme, is to continue to collaborate principally with alternative primary education delivery channels, provided that they are non-discriminatory against girls. An associated strategy is to extend non-formal basic education to women and youth, with a focus on parental education and skills training, as well as on early childhood care and development. Key partners will include selected national NGOs, as well as the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, CARE International and Save the Children Alliance. Monitoring and evaluation will draw on the 1998 study on *Education for Afghans* as a baseline. Programme impact will be measured in terms of student learning, as reflected by standardized assessment tests.

Protection and promotion

23. This programme is interlinked with the survival and development programmes. It will address advocacy with national authorities, civil society and the humanitarian

assistance community on the rights of children and women. As the promotion element in this programme presents a new and more explicit focus on children and women at high risk, the strategies need to be responsive and agile. The mix of strategies includes: (a) improved service delivery to the most affected groups of children and women, including traumatized and disabled children, and widows; (b) strengthening linkages between policy advocacy and positive features of Afghan social values, e.g. family dignity; and (c) the integration of human rights promotion into programme activities. A core team of Afghan and international trainers will be established. Post-training support will include a quarterly journal and a continuous process to improve child rights indicators for their use in community education and survey work.

Monitoring and evaluation

24. The IMEP will guide work in this area, which will include monitoring the following: the situation of children and women using rights-based indicators, with gender equality as a prominent component; implementation of UNICEF-assisted programme activities, with particular attention to effectiveness in terms of inputs, outputs and impact; and results of UNICEF and United Nations advocacy on Taliban policy and edicts so that advocacy efforts on children's and women's rights are better gauged in terms of effectiveness. In addition to annual reviews, evaluation work will begin in the second year on strategic issues. A final country programme assessment will be undertaken near the conclusion of the cycle.

Collaboration with partners

25. Priority will be placed on enhancing collaboration with United Nations agencies, donors and NGOs. In doing so, UNICEF will be promoting programme sustainability and self-reliance through capacity-building with sectoral departments and at the subnational level with all partners. The nature of collaboration will vary among programmes and partners. An expected result of collaboration is that the rights and concerns of Afghan children and women will have a prominent place in the international media and on the international agenda.

Fund-raising strategy

26. The proposed level of supplementary funding is $18 million. As long as armed conflict continues, emergency funding will be the main source of supplementary funding. In the event that peace returns, regular supplementary funding sources will be required to meet programme funding needs. The annual United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan represents the formal fund-raising framework that attracts funds for UNICEF as well. Such a flexible approach is required in the Afghan context. Funds received by UNICEF through the Appeal will be within the supplementary funding ceiling. There will be close cooperation with donors and National Committees for UNICEF in fund-raising, including the development of fund-raising information materials.

Programme management

27. The country programme management plan includes provisions for the training of UNICEF staff on rights and gender equality. It will support programming flexibility and responsiveness, as required by the fluid Afghan situation. There will be increased delegation of authority and accountability to field offices for support to programme delivery. A major challenge will be to maintain and further improve high-quality, well-targeted advocacy for children's and women's rights.

28. The UNICEF country office will be based in Islamabad, unless and until the situation changes and all United Nations offices relocate to Kabul. There will be four field offices inside the country. These represent a consolidation and strengthening of field support vis-à-vis the current programme, which has operated five smaller offices according to geographical regions. The locations of these offices will be determined at a later stage based on political and security developments in Afghanistan. The country office in Islamabad will provide management, policy development, policy guidance and oversight. The programme will be supported by the communication/information, monitoring and evaluation, supply, operations and information technology functions.

TABLE

COUNTRY : AFGHANISTAN
PROGRAMME : 2005-2002

LINKAGE OF PROGRAMME BUDGET AND STAFFING/STAFF COSTS

PROGRAMME SECTION/AREAS AND FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAMME BUDGET				POSTS a/									STAFF COSTS b/		
	GR	FSF	NSF	TOTAL	D2/ASG	P5/6	P3/4	P1/2	NOLL	IP	NP	GS	TOTAL	IP	LOCAL	TOTAL
GENERAL RESOURCES																
SURVIVAL PROGRAMME	12,760,000			12,760,000	0	1	5	2	0	0	1	7	8	25	196,243	318,792	514,335
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	4,023,000			4,023,000	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	4	3	12	196,243	139,719	335,963
PROTECTION/PROMOTION PROGRAMME	3,140,000			3,140,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	196,243	40,770	237,013
CROSS SECTORAL PROGRAMME	6,538,000			6,538,000	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	3	18	42	2,338,215	961,162	3,299,377
TOTAL GR	26,461,000			26,461,000	0	2	8	7	1	0	10	15	30	66	3,586,944	1,760,740	5,346,684
SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING																
SURVIVAL PROGRAMME		0	14,460,000	14,460,000	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	3	11	358,454	390,579	749,033
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME		0	2,840,000	2,840,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PROTECTION/PROMOTION PROGRAMME		0	700,000	700,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SF		0	18,000,000	18,000,000	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	3	11	358,454	390,579	749,033
TOTAL GR & SF	26,461,000	0	18,000,000	44,461,000	0	2	9	7	2	0	11	20	42	73	3,945,398	2,151,319	6,095,717
SUPPORT BUDGET			Operation costs	1,149,400												
			Staffing		0	1	1	2	0	0	1	4	9	18	1,326,558	837,739	2,164,297
GRAND TOTAL (GR + SF + SB)					0	3	1	9	2	0	14	23	51	91	5,271,956	2,988,058	8,260,014
	Number of posts and staff costs															
	Current programme cycle										14	19	52	85		
	At the end of proposed programme cycle (indicative only)										14	23	51	88	5,271,956	2,988,058	8,260,014

GR = general resources
SF = supplementary funding
FSF = funded supplementary funding
NSF = non supplementary funding
IP = international Professional
NP = national Professional
GS = General Service
SB = support budget

a/ Each proj. represents of its funding source, supports the country programme as a whole
b/ Includes temporary assistance and overtime

E/ICEF/1999/P/L.25